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THE DARKEY & COMIC DRAMA

The Lady Barber



Chicago.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS.

PETER BILLIONS.....*Bob Slavin.*
BUSBY—A broken down speculator.....*Frank Dumont.*
ELEGANT SPRUCE—A dude.....*Ed. French.*
MRS. HAYSEED.....*George Powers.*

Plays twenty minutes.

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"THE LADY BARBER."

SCENE.—*Plain chamber door in flat R. Papered window in flat L. Barber's chair R. C. Table with mugs. Large bowl of lather and brush. Large razor and razor strop on wall. Bottle of seltzer and various articles on a table C. to denote barber shop business. Placards on wall "shaving, 10 cents." "Bay rum, extra" "Shampoo, 25 cents." Busby discovered at chair and while speaking hangs his coat on wall.]*

Busby. There's no use trying to keep this barber shop open any longer. I'm losing money daily and see but one chance to get back my old customers and attract new ones, and that is to engage a lady barber. That would be a new idea and it would attract everybody to my shop. A beautiful girl to shave the gents—capital idea, but it can't be carried out. I've advertised every day for a lady barber but so far none have applied for the position. [**Peter Billions** with whitewash bucket enters and glances around walls.]

Peter. Is this the place that wants whitewashing, or ain't it the place that don't want it?

Busby. I haven't sent for any whitewasher. Who are you anyway? I don't know you.

Peter. I don't know you either and I don't want to know you either—you mind your business and I'll mind yours. Good day. [*Going.*]

Busby. Wait—stop a moment.

Peter. Is this the place I'm to whitewash?

Busby. No—but I can give you a better job, come here. [*Aside.*] Here's an idea. I can fool the public and pass this fellow off as a lady barber.

Peter. Well, here I am; what do you want of me?

Busby. I want to engage you to work in this shop. I'll give you five dollars a week.

Peter. All right—give it to me and I'll hire you to work for me right away.

Busby. No—you don't understand me. I want to hire *you* to work for me.

Peter. It don't make any difference to me who does the work, as long as you do it.

Busby. Now let us understand each other thoroughly. I engage you to work in this barber shop at a salary of five dollars per week.

Peter. Well, give it to me—don't stand there talking about it all day.

Busby. Then you want the money in advance?

Peter. Yes. Then I know who's got it.

Busby. Very well. Then here's your money. [*Gives money.*]

Peter. Now you're talking business—now what am I to do? whitewash?

Busby. No sir. I want you to be a lady barber.

Peter. A lady what?

Busby. A lady—a lady to attend to my shop.

Peter. [*Going.*] Good day.

Busby. But hold on. You've got my money.

Peter. I know I have. That's all right. You know I've got it and that's all *you* need know. I'm no lady—and I ain't going to be one for five dollars a week.

Busby. Come back here—you don't understand me. I don't want you to be a real lady only make believe you are one.

Peter. There are too many make-believe ladies in this city now.

Busby. I'm going to furnish the dress and you'll make believe that you are a lady—and attend to my customers. You will shave them and be polite and affable.

Peter. Laughable? Do I laugh at them?

Busby. No—you are polite and pleasing.

Peter. Oh, I see. I do as I please. Well, where's the dress?

Busby. Here it is. [*Obtains dress-jacket, blonde wig and hoops.*] Here it is. Now put it on. First of all put away that whitewash bucket. [*Peter examines articles closely.*]

Peter. All the stuff isn't here is it?

Busby. That's all you need to dress like a lady. That's all I've got to give you.

Peter. All right. I'll have to make one myself. [*Makes*

bustle out of his coat, tying the sleeves around his waist.]
Don't I look better now?

Busby. Hurry up and dress in case some of my customers should come into the shop.

Peter. Well, keep them out until the lady finishes her "twilight." [*Puts hoops around his neck, tying the band around throat.*]

Busby. No—no—that won't do. Tie the band around your waist.

Peter. Around my waist? How do you know?

Busby. You never mind—do as I tell you. [*Peter fixes hoops correctly and puts on dress. Then wig on wrong. Busby corrects it. Then the jacket or basque. Goes to mirror and powders his face, ad lib.*]

Busby. Come—hurry up—what are you doing?

Peter. Doing what a lady does—powdering my face. [*Comes c.*] How do I look?

Busby. Splendid! Now let's see you walk like a lady. [*Peter strides across stage.*] No—no—that won't do—walk something like this. [*Mincing gait.*]

Peter. That's very good. You put on this dress.

Busby. No—I've hired you. Try to walk as I show you. [*Peter imitates lady's walk, exposing leg of white pants.*]

Busby. The dress—a trifle lower please.

Peter. No. I'm crossing a muddy street.

Busby. Well—you are partially instructed in appearance. Now you must be polite to the gents who call to be shaved. Say to them, "will you get shaved sir? Have your head shampooed?" And to a good-looking young man be extremely polite, sigh, smile and giggle.

Peter. Giggle? I can't giggle.

Busby. You must try to giggle. [*Peter giggles ha! ha! ha!*]

Peter. How's that for a giggle?

Busby. That will do. Now remember you shave and charge ten cents—and you will charge five cents extra for bay rum. If you need change just call me—I'll be in the next room. Remember, be polite and above all things, a lady. [*Busby ex. L. Peter gazes after him and laughs.*]

Peter. Here's a nice situation. Play lady for five dollars a week. I can't shave anybody. I never shaved anybody in my life. I carry a razor but I don't shave with it. I cut with it. [*Enter Dude—bows to Peter who curtsseys and bows up and down stage ad lib. Peter chucks him under chin.*]

Peter. [*Giggling.*] Well, young man—what do you want?

Dude. I heard there was a pretty lady barber over here, and my dear miss—I want to get shaved. And this dear moustache of mine wants curling.

Peter. [*Imitates his voice.*] Sit in that chair and I'll curl your moustache! [*Dude sits in chair. Peter puts towel about his neck, chokes Dude in tying it. Dude struggles to get out but Peter forces him back into chair.*]

Peter. Sit still or I'll step on you. Now my dear Dudie, pay in advance.

Dude. How much is it, my dear?

Peter. Dollar and a half.

Dude. Isn't that exorbitant?

Peter. No, it's a dollar and a half and hand it to me mighty quick. [*Bus. Dude pays money. Peter raises dress to put money in trousers' pocket. Dude observes the act and Peter looks bashful. Peter takes razor and strops it—tests razor and then takes lather bowl and lathers the Dude's face. He tries to get out of chair but Peter keeps him in it. Takes razor and shaves one side of Dude's face and looks around to wipe razor. Sees the coat on wall and wipes razor on it. Busby rushes in from L.*]

Busby. Here you rascal. That's my coat. [*Peter dabs the lather brush into Busby's face and chases him out L. Busby sputtering and threatening Peter. Peter then dabs the brush on Dude's face as if unconscious of the act while gazing after Busby, and going back to chair. Dude jumps out of chair L. Peter forces him back.*]

Peter. Hold up—don't you want some Bay rum?

Dude. No, I don't want any Bay rum.

Peter. You paid for it, and you must have it. [*Turns seltzer bottle upon Dude's face. Dude gasps and rushes out in great anger. Busby runs in from L.*]

Busby. How dare you act in such a manner.

Peter. How dare you tell a lady barber her business.

Busby. You'll drive my customers away.

Peter. Shut up. You talk as if you owned this place, get out of here. [*Turns seltzer bottle stream upon Busby who exits in towering passion.*]

Peter. I'll show him who runs this barber shop. I'm a lady, I am, and don't you forget it. [*Woman with twin babies enters door.*]

Woman. Are you the lady barber?

Peter. Yes ma'am—what do you want? Do you want your bangs cut?

Woman. No, I want to buy some soap to use on my children's heads for dandruff.

Peter. Well—we've got some nice flea soap.

Woman. I don't care what it is as long as it can cure dandruff.

Peter. All right—one dollar please. Always pay in advance. [*Woman pays money, and Peter places babies in the chair, and stirs lather.*]

Woman. You'll be very careful of them, Miss?

Peter. I won't miss them. Which one of them has got the most dandruff?

Woman. That one. [*Peter lathers the one indicated—Woman interferes. Peter tells her to mind her own business. He lathers the baby's face and head again. Woman again interferes and Peter dabs the brush upon her face. While she is stamping around, Peter lathers the other baby. Woman comes to interfere and Peter dabs the brush on her face again. The Woman seizes the razor, and prepares to attack Peter.*]

Peter. Ah, that's your game is it? Well I've got one myself! [*Produces razor from his pocket, and chases Woman around stage, catches her, and throws her out of window—glass crash. Busby rushes in from L. I E. Peter seizes him and throws him out of the window also. Then he flings the babies out through window—and with lather brush, stands R. of window and lathers faces of Busby and Woman who peer in and try to re-enter through the broken window. Work finale quick and with much confusion.*]

CURTAIN.

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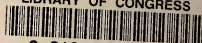
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